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With the respects of J. Wheeler

DISCOURSE

ON THE DEATH OF

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

BY

REV. J. WHEELER.





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DISCOURSE

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

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GEN. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF BURLINGTON AND VICINITY,

APRIL 23, 1841.

BY JOHN WHEELER,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author has availed himself of the opportunity, arising from a request to repeat the discourse in another place, to rewrite, to some extent, the notice of the character of the late President.

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DISCOURSE.

PSALM 46 : 10.

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD, I WILL BE EXALTED AMONG THE HEATHEN,
I WILL BE EXALTED IN THE EARTH.

WE are assembled, fellow citizens, to offer the last tokens of respect to our departed Chief Magistrate ; and to consider the lessons of solemn instruction derived from his sudden and unexpected death. Whatever difference of opinion we may have had concerning him, before his election, the moment he assumed the insignia of office, and was declared PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, he was no longer the simple citizen concerning whom there had been a sharp controversy, but the supreme executive of law in the land. The feelings of reverence which every good man bears to the Constitution of the country, as its highest declared law, and to the just institutions and statutes emanating from it, then gathered itself about this man, as the more outward and visible organ through whom we were to receive the high benefits of our united government. Our interests of property, of family, of national honor, of happiness, and of life itself, were, for the time, placed in his hands, as the personage whom the law constituted protector, and keeper of them all.

Before this, many loved the man for his frank simplicity and freedom from all ostentation, for his benignity and condescension to the most humble, for his spontaneous and unwearied benevolence, for his incorruptible honesty in every pecuniary trust, for his ready, constant and unwavering devotion to his country, for his pure and simple Christian faith, and for a beautiful union of private excellence with public virtue, that has rarely been equalled, and perhaps never surpassed among our citizens. But when he was invested with the robe of State, and sat down in the highest seat of authority, he assumed before us a new character, and we all did him reverence as the minister of the law for the highest good to the nation. We all looked to him, as the common centre and head of the people, and felt ourselves to be one by our union together under him.

It is because he was thus regarded, that his sudden death has given such a shock to the whole nation, filling every city, and village, and hamlet, and habitation, with sorrow. When it was said, "*the President is dead,*" it was felt like the electric power from the centre to the circumference of the land ; "the man of business dropped his pen—the artisan dropped his tools—the scholar closed his book—children looked up to their parents, and wives to the countenances of their husbands, and the wail of sorrow rose, as if each had lost a parent, or some near and dear friend."

This deep and universal feeling, which now pervades our country, is grounded in that common but mysterious reverence for law, which belongs to every reflecting mind. This reverence has made the death of the chief ruler, or minister of the law, of every nation, a solemn and awful event ; an event to be marked by the most serious and reverent ceremonies, and by the most solemn and unaffected tokens of grief ; an event to be recorded in its history, and to mark an era in its existence, among the nations. No matter what may be the form of the government, no matter what the circumstances of the nation, the death of its Ruler makes

a pause in it, as though paralysis had struck its thousand employments ; or as though the angel of death had poured his vials upon the whole people. And such it should be ; for, at the moment of the blow, it is as though law itself were dead, and the great cord of social existence broken in sunder. But it is not so. There is that, which still liveth, as we bear witness to ourselves by the solemn respect we pay to the departed, by the reverent feelings we indulge, and especially by the law and the order we call to our aid in our formal processions, in our outward arrangements of honor, and in our habiliments of mourning. These all become inward and outward testimonies, that in the midst of death there is life ; life which still recognizes our social unity, by the common forms of sorrow which we assume, and by their quiet and orderly arrangement. And were it not that there are deeper principles within us, displayed by reverence for law, as that by which we have been and ever ought to be governed, deeper principles than mere instincts, and stronger forces than our conventional agreements, and our formal arrangements, which we call compacts,—were there not something stronger than all these, we should be, when our head is struck down, like that community of insects, in which, when the head is destroyed, the commonwealth is broken up ; disunion, disorganization, and finally, universal death ensue. Well and of good right, therefore, has our nation poured forth and is still pouring forth her expressions of bereavement and sorrow.

“How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of rejoicing ; how is she become as a widow ; she that was great among the nations and prince among the provinces, she weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are upon her cheeks. Her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.”

It is in the way I have pointed out, that the death of the chief ruler of a country reveals to a reflecting people the ground of that government on which they depend for the se-

curity of all their earthly interests. In the shock they receive, I have said, each suffers in the bereavement as though a near and dear friend had fallen, and thus makes it manifest that there is, in the bosom of each, the ground of reverent regard for that, for which the ruler existed, viz : for the law of which he was the organ and administrator. The ready and the formal manner in which this multitude have assembled, which is indeed but a representation of the manner of the whole people, to express their grief, and to speak of their bereavement, shows the deep feeling that pervades every bosom. We are not here by the command of any earthly authority, fearful of terrible consequences to ourselves or to others, if we do not come. But we come from those spontaneous feelings of the heart, which are not to be repressed or frowned into silence, but which imperiously demand some outward and public expression of love and reverent regard for that law and order of which our departed ruler was to us the organ and expression. It is not a private and personal affair, at all, that has brought us together ; it is not a partisan object ; it is not a statute of the land, nor even a precedent, in this country ; it is the solemn feeling of respect, in the bosom of all and of each of us, towards our constituted guardian of life and liberty, of law and order. It is this feeling, which leads us to assemble, in circumstances of joy, to rejoice in harmonious unity ; and which, on occasions of danger, leads us to assemble for mutual consultation and protection ; and which, on occasions of sorrow, as this day, draws us together to sympathize and to express our common griefs in a common and united way. It is this feeling in each and all of us, which naturally and necessarily leads to the existence of the social state ; and which, under the direction of that feeling of accountableness to right, or that idea of justice, which all men profess, impels them naturally and necessarily to the formation of political and civil government. It may be called by various names, as the social feeling, as the law of social existence, or, if regarded from

another position, and spoken of not in relation to the spontaneous expressions of mere social desire, but in relation to civil and political institutions, it may be said to be the feeling of accountableness applied to mutual intercourse, or the idea of justice developing itself in human institutions, and applying itself to human exigencies. Its name is of small consequence ; its reality is essential to the existence of the social state, and to the institutions of society. Its existence in our minds, and its manifestations in our habits, would be a practical rebuke to all, who might not join us ; we should cast them forth not by a statute or by force, but because they were without this law of social existence—they would be law-less. Henceforth they would eschew the expressions and tokens of social life, and withdraw from the law that urges us to unite our fortunes together in joy, in danger, in prosperity, in sorrow, and in bereavement. If a human being, so denying social existence, could be supposed actually to exist, he would, henceforth, become like Cain, a wanderer in the earth ; and it would come to pass, that whosoever should meet him would slay him, as an enemy to the race.

The political and civil institutions, and regulations of a country have, for their object, the developement and egress of this social feeling, so that there may be produced the highest happiness, the greatest purity, and the most just and elevated character in the nation. These institutions and regulations may assume any particular form, which the people may choose, or their peculiar circumstances demand. Different nations may have different forms, and the same nation different forms at different periods, and still have the same object in view, and be governed by the same principles in seeking that object. As the essential character of religion is not created by its outward forms and ceremonies or its ecclesiastical organization and rules, but may be found in every nation in him “who feareth God and worketh righteousness,” so the essential character of a State is not created by its outward forms, its public institutions and regulations, but

by that social feeling which knits men together in mutual intercourse, that each may give and receive whatever justice permits and enjoins. Government is thus essential to the existence of society, and no company of human beings can live together without it. It does not spring from the will of the strongest, nor out of the authority of the most knowing ; nor does it come from tradition, nor the accidental circumstances of birth, but from that inward law, which, as the voice of God, enjoins social existence on all human beings, under a sense of responsibility to justice and equity.

Moreover, it is not true that the freedom of a State is derived from any particular form of government, any more than that the essential character of the State is. Its freedom consists in the natural going forth of the social feeling—the spontaneous development of the law of social existence—in all mutual intercourse under such particular directions as perfect justice prescribes for securing the happiness and elevating the character of the people. These laws and regulations may be found under one form of government as really, I do not say as naturally, as under another form. And their destruction or violation may, in certain circumstances, be found under one form, as really as under another. To sit under one's own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest or make afraid, and to follow, without let or hindrance, the honest and pure desires of the heart, as one may choose, does not belong exclusively to one age, or to one government. It is found in every age, in some quiet spots, and under various forms of government. And to feel both life and property to be insecure, and to be held, not of right, but at the mercy of the absolute and irresponsible authority of others, has been the wretched and unhappy condition of multitudes in all ages, and under all the varieties of social organization. The crimes of the "bloody Mary," or of Cæsar Borgia, will find their parallel in the Athenian Democracy, banishing some of her wisest and most incorruptible citizens, and poisoning some of the purest and most

enlightened statesmen and philosophers the world ever saw ; or, in a Parisian populace, crowding its prisons and feeding the axe of the executioner with the purest and noblest blood of the nation, in the name of liberty and of equal rights. Extremes are easily brought together ; and a multitude of men, clamorous for some object, which their excited passions demand, will take the advice of, and give the lead to the most ardent and daring will in their company, and be driven on, they scarcely know how, to the accomplishment of their purpose. And the most violent and self-willed man, finding or having excited the people about him, will guide them to suit his own purposes. It is thus, that extremes meet ; and the man of the multitude may become the tyrant of the multitude. It is the certainty of this, that led the most accurate historians and the most philosophic minds of antiquity, many of whom wrote in the midst of free institutions, to affirm that the demagogue and the tyrant were of the democracy, and ranked themselves with it ; that is, they sought to break down every man, who by wisdom and intelligence or accidental circumstances, was distinguished above the mass of society, that they might rule the mass at their will, and make it do their bidding. This is as true, in our day, as in the palmy periods of Greece and Rome, and we have known as lamentable illustrations of it. Pisistratus, Julius Cæsar, Cromwell, Robespierre, and Napoleon, were of the popular parties of the day.

A most despotic government may, for the time being, be under the guidance of a wise and enlightened monarch, who shall advance, by all means in his power, the best interests of the people. An absolute government is not necessarily destructive of the ends for which government exists, although, whatever may be its outward form, it contains the seeds of tyranny in its irresponsible character, and its uncontrolled will. The most absolute monarch, perhaps, in Europe, during his reign, which has just closed, commenced a series of unexampled reforms, in the administra-

tion of justice, in the economy of the royal household, in making his subjects freeholders in the soil, and in organizing his army of citizens, and therefore not independent of the people. He declares that "the new system is based upon the principle, that every subject, personally free, be able to raise himself, and develop his powers freely, without let or hindrance from any other ; that the public burdens be borne in common and just proportions ; that equality before the law, be secured to every subject ; that justice be rigidly and punctually administered ; that merit, in whatsoever rank it may be found, be enabled to rise without obstacle ; that the government be carried on with unity, order and power ; and that, by the education of the people, and the spread of true religion, the general interests, and a national spirit be promoted, as the only secure basis of the national welfare."*

Higher and better objects could scarcely be proposed by any government, and if carried out with efficiency and integrity, there would be the greatest security for personal liberty and for the rights of property, although those of citizenship might be partially denied. A strong objection to such forms would always exist, however well the government might be administered for the time being, because they contain no provision by which such administration can be secured from time to time, without destructive revolutions. A more fundamental objection to them, if the nation is supposed to be well enough instructed to guide itself, is, that the social feeling of the nation is not consulted, and cannot have its natural and free developement. Society becomes artificial in its forms and manners : and orders itself according to the peculiarities of a single mind, or a small class of minds, and in the end, the government becomes a practical, if not a conscious, denial to the citizen of his free right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This cannot but produce a dwarfish effect upon the national mind, depriving it of that

* Prof. Stowe's Report on Elementary Public Instruction, to the General Assembly of Ohio.

free and vigorous feeling, that fresh and active spirit, which spontaneously strives for the most worthy ends by the most noble means. This spirit is worthy to be cultivated even at the risk of many evils. Although the "fierce democracy" of Athens was terribly unjust and utterly regardless of the rights and character of many of her best and worthiest citizens, yet, like a too luxuriant plant, it seemed, at times, to shoot out from itself the most rich and beautiful foliage, and to give joyful hope of mature and glorious fruit. It, however, only exhausted itself, and brought on premature decay and suicidal destruction. This feeling ought not, therefore, to be strangled by the form of government. It is the strong foundation of national character, and, healthfully directed, will shoot forth in great and attractive beauty. While, therefore, we should cherish, on the one hand, the active developement of this national feeling, every good man will strive, on the other, to restrain and to order it by the perfect law of righteousness, lest it assume the ministry of destruction, and, having destroyed every good institution in society, finally destroy itself, by a leap into the arms of despotism.

Thus it is, that the freedom of a State does not arise from its form of government, but from its action being such, that the social feelings of the nation, in their best and widest sense, are most freely and most equitably expressed. This should be attempted only under the condition of sufficient knowledge to do it with intelligence and under permanent legal forms. For it is surely better for those, who cannot take care of themselves, that others should care for them, than that they should be left to vegetate in barbarism and brutality. It is necessary, therefore, that the form of government, rightfully to develop the social feelings of the nation, should be such, as not only to secure the personal rights of the people, and their rights of property, but their rights as citizens; that is, their participation in the legislative power. For it is through this, that the spirit of the people, the social feeling of the nation, expresses itself; awakening

a happy contentedness and an unseen joy, in the conscious adaptation of the statutes to the exercise and expression of the national spirit, and the national feeling. It is in this way that a representative government, one that re-presents, in its forms of business and in the spirit of its laws, the character and the feelings of the nation, is the only government which freedom and liberty can desire, or which an enlightened patriot can seek for its own sake, or can endure, except from an iron-hearted necessity.

The rise of parties in our country seems to have sprung, in a great degree, from two sources: 1. From a misconception of the foundation of government itself; and 2. From considering only the external forms, which government has assumed. Many writers, in speaking of its foundation, considered it a compact, or conventional agreement between the States, or the individuals composing the States, concerning which men might, of good right, have different, or even opposite opinions. This overlooked, to a great extent, that ever-existent social feeling in man, which constantly seeks to express itself by some unity of law or of personal head, that shall make all to live, and move as a harmonious company; and which seeks the outward form of legislative and executive power only that it may justly and truly attain the security, the happiness, and the excellence which, under a sense of justice, it seeks as its true and proper end. By neglecting to regard this, or not honestly seeking to follow it, come many of the evils of party spirit. The view which was taken, confined the origin of government to the compact or conventional agreement, and then it was classified among the existing forms of government in the world; of which there are usually said to be three, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. But our government was not either of these. The question then was, towards which will it tend in its workings? Will it be democratic? Will it be aristocratic? or, will it be monarchical? And the men of the Revolution broke up from a common union, in which they fought, side

by side, against a common foe, to battle it with fury and hate against each other. You are for democracy, it was said ; and you for aristocracy ; and you for monarchy ! This has been handed down from sire to son ; and the same party names and party epithets, like invincible soldiers, make their regular appearance in the field, on each electioneering campaign.

There is certainly a more just and honest way of looking at this subject ; and one which this solemn and affecting occasion points out, by making us sensible of a common ground of grief independent of our political parties, as the way of peace and harmony. And this is, in the first place, to have done with considering that our government was organized after any of these forms, or that it has any exclusive tendency to any one of them. And in the second place, to consider it as organized to secure our rights as men, viz. our personal security, and our rights of property, and also our rights as citizens, viz. a participation in the legislative power by representation, which shall make us one in the spirit of our laws, and in the simplicity and unity of our national action.*

There is, then, a deeper and more solemn view of this subject, which is brought before us by this affecting occasion ; and that is, that there is a pulse of social feeling in society, independent of all or any of these forms of government ; a feeling from which no one can divest himself except by renouncing existence in human society ; a feeling, which is distinctly called into conscious life by the event which has called us together ; and this, working consciously or unconsciously, has led to the formation of our government, and now constitutes its sustaining strength. It is not sustained by its forms ; on the contrary, they are created and sustained by this feeling. A paper called the Declaration of Independence, or another called the Constitution, does not sustain the government, nor does it abide because it tends to

* See note at the end.

democracy, or to aristocracy, or to monarchy. It has a deeper foundation than all, in the hearts and consciences of the people. The universal shock, that has passed through the land, is because the cold finger of death has touched the nerve that unites us together, and made us shudder at the possibility of its paralysis. By the form of our government, we have given the most free and full influence to this social feeling, upon all the institutions of the country. Universal suffrage brings it to act upon the whole structure and action of society in its civil and political forms. It thus becomes a perennial fountain to supply the nation with vigorous hope, and with unceasing activity. To that very hope and to that very enterprising activity, the demagogue and the man of tyrannical will, must apply themselves, if they would attain their selfish and guilty objects. They will, therefore, press our hopes into bright but unreal imaginings, and our enterprise and activity they will urge until we lose all security and permanence in a heedless rush after a condition, not of equality before law, but of likeness and similarity in outward circumstances, which is unattainable within the limits of human existence. Our only hope, then, is in requiring with great earnestness and severity, that the social feeling of the nation shall order itself according to justice, and by the rules that the supreme laws of the land prescribe. Every good man is called upon to lay aside party bickerings, and to watch and to pray, that justice and judgment may be the stability of our times.

The man, whose death we this day deplore, brought to his high office a most uncommon share of sympathy with the common mind. The essential qualities of humanity seem to have made his bosom their peculiar residence ; and he was, therefore, far beyond most good men, in the interior of his heart, the just and adequate representative of the national feeling. The men who had become, by choice or by accident, the leaders of party, the nation rejected ; and called him from his private ministrations of benevolent kind-

ness, and from the quiet of his agricultural pursuits, to guide and to keep, in like spirit, her high interests. How far from all bitterness and party rancor does his interview with his predecessor show him to have been, in which with great simplicity he said, "I never gave an office to a relative, nor asked one; but if now you will send a grandson, whose only inheritance is his father's name, and sword, which has been well used in his country's service, to the military school, it will be a favor indeed." None of the angry feelings of the day were his. He came at the bidding of the nation, not to destroy, but to fulfil.

May we not yet hope, that in coming years men shall arise to bless the nation with a clearness of intellectual vision and a depth of conscientious feeling, which shall make them safe guards, not to a party, but to the nation; men, by whose wise measures and by whose vigorous efforts intrigue shall be disappointed, selfishness rebuked, and party strife quenched?

In turning our attention from the political lessons which this event teaches, we cannot but recognize in it the hand of Almighty God. The chief ruler of the country has been smitten down before our eyes; and it has been by the power of Him by whom "kings reign and princes decree justice." It is but a brief space of time since the joyful pageant of thousands of our citizens was seen, thronging our streets to nominate him for President. So high were their expectations, that they seemed almost welcoming him beforehand to his high station, and associating with his name and official power, the security of their interests and the realization of the choicest hopes of their patriotism. This feeling, which rose up in the midst of us, came also, like the rising and onward rush of a mighty tide, from all parts of our country, and commingling, bore on its swelling bosom the object of its hopes. Around the Capitol, it came to its fullness, and depositing there its cherished treasure, it retired

in gentle murmurs to its native fountains, the hearths and the hearts of the citizens. Then with what deep and intense interest all looked upon the forms and ceremonies of the fourth of March, those last and highest channels through which the national feeling could express itself towards the man of its choice. How we all felt ourselves to be represented by the mass of men, which thronged the avenues, and courts, and aisles of the Capitol, with jubilant feeling; and rent the air with the spontaneous expressions of men, who were free; and who, irrespective of sectional or of party animosity, rejoiced in this token of their freedom. With what deep and exhilarating feelings of satisfaction and of peace the nation listened to the calm and benignant sentiments of truth and justice, that were uttered by him, on the day in which, as its ruler, he, calling God to witness, opened his heart for its inspection, and spoke of what the ruler of a free people should be, and what he should do. These sentiments had scarcely passed from his lips, and the feeling of joy and of hope, which they inspired, was yet warm in the heart, when behold! the candlestick is removed out of its place, the fire has gone out on the high altar of the country; and lo, the sanctuary of power is enveloped in darkness! It is the hand of Him, who worketh in the mysterious silence of inscrutable providence. Hark! The voice, from within the veil, cries unto us: "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his earth." "Be still; and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth."

Thus it is we live, not merely under the constitution of this country, and the government which it establishes, but under a higher and wider-reaching kingdom, which comprehends us, but as an item within its domain. Kings, princes, governments, nations, are but its ministers. Revolutions, changes, distress of nations, are but its means. Thrones, dynasties, empires, rise and shadow forth their

power, and then sink to darkness and oblivion, while it holds on its eternal and undisturbed way. This is the government that speaks unto us in this its providence; and says to the nation, the "God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified." But when the man, on whom our hearts had leaned as our stay and support, is struck down, and so struck as to show that the desires of a mighty nation are rebuked, and the prayers of sincere worshipers are denied, and the confiding hope of innumerable multitudes are scattered at the grave's mouth, whose conscience does not respond, alas! alas! we have not glorified "God, in whose hand our breath is, but we have trusted in an arm of flesh. We have called these gods, but behold! they die like men."

In surveying the history of our country, for the last six years, we can see disaster after disaster has followed the nation, and filled every part of it with lamentation and sorrow. While there has been comparatively little suffering from deprivation of the necessities of life, our hopes of prosperity have been blighted, our means of enjoyment have been curtailed, and our ability to fulfil our honest intentions has been destroyed. It is not, merely, that the business of life has been fluctuating and unstable, but coming events have defied the forecast of the wisest prudence; the foolishness and the wisdom of this world have been alike baffled. This has affected, not merely our outward condition, but apparently the honesty and good faith of mutual intercourse, and has often placed the just and the upright side by side with the unjust and the deceiver, and merged them in one common condemnation. Nor has this been confined to the mutual relations of our own country, but we are more or less dishonored before the world, by our commercial and financial embarrassments; and have our name repeated as evil, in the marts of commerce, and in the high places of the earth;—and, if not a bye-word, we are almost a reproach among the nations. Calamities have indeed fallen upon us.

Fire has wasted many of our beautiful places; floods have swept away our wealth; the ocean has swallowed up our riches, and many of our States are ready to sink under embarrassments. And now the entanglements of our foreign relations, send streaming up the horizon the meteor signals of war; and God has taken our great Captain from us. O, let us be instructed by these providences, lest at last he rule us with a rod of iron, and dash us in pieces as a potter's vessel. We were on the topmost wave of prosperity, and had become giddy with our high elevation. Our vanity and our pride were expanding in every direction. Instead of saying, behold, we count those happy, which endure, we eschewed such sentiments, counting those the most happy, whose hopes were the most gorgeous, and whose expectations were the most extravagant. In this day of prosperity, the very charities of the nation began to be sacrilegiously withdrawn from their pure purposes, that we might gild the earthly castles of our hopes with unknown magnificence and splendor. This was our condition, when financial embarrassments commenced, and our hopes were changed to fears. Some ascribed the difficulty to the perplexities of an overdone foreign commerce, some to a feverish rage to acquire wealth without labor by what is called speculation, some to what they called the injudicious action of the government in changing its fiscal arrangements, and some to a reckless expansion of the currency. Every thing, as cause or effect, seemed to combine to induce perplexity and distress; various schemes were proposed; experiments were tried, and temporary expedients resorted to every where to keep up our visionary hopes. Thus the nation has gone on for the last six years without thinking of, much less understanding its moral condition, and has only plunged deeper and deeper into sorrow, without returning and humbling itself before God. It has not understood its moral condition. Who does not know that human nature, in a course of unhumbled prosperity, gives rein to its desires until its hopes

become irrational, and its expectations alarming from their very extravagance and absurdity. Let then any cause arise, so small perhaps as to be unnoticed, which shall shew these hopes to be without substance ; and solicitude and fear will take the place of hope, and the whole horizon appear filled with objects of distrust and jealousy. To reason a man or a nation out of such a state is impossible. Every thing that can be said is only food for its jealousy. The state itself is not produced by reasoning, and, therefore, we are not to be reasoned out of it. The nation needs to be held quiet and still by suffering, before it will know its own condition. It needs to feel the rod before it will lie down humbled and subdued ; and then new hope may be created out of humility and confidence in an overruling providence. *Be still ;* have done with your devices and expedients, *be still and know ;* reflect, until you understand, that there is a God, who rules over all, and who will be exalted in the earth. But the nation would not be still. Goaded on by disappointment and by suffering, it compounded all the materials of excitement into one great mass, and, gathering strength from every quarter, rushed on to accomplish its purpose. It never paused, but bore on with irresistible power the man of its choice, nor stayed until it placed him in his seat, and gave him the sceptre of authority. He wielded it for a day. And then the king of terrors seized him. And now one ruleth over us whom no man intended should rule, and no man expected would rule. The one party is driven forth from place and from power, while the other, occupying their place and their station, find, at the moment of their elevation, an unseen hand removing their head from his station, and giving it to whomsoever it listeth. “Be still, and know that I am God ; I will be exalted in the earth.”

This is to us all a most emphatic lesson, teaching us that after all our efforts, and all our most cherished desires, there is still an authority, that rules according to its own wisdom and righteousness, in all our affairs. That, struggle as we

may to accomplish our personal or our national purposes, we are every moment liable to have our best plans frustrated, and the most universal expectations disappointed. No devices of man can compass the wisdom of God. And no man, and no nation can prosper for a long time whilst they condemn or disregard a government which holds them in its hand, as instruments of its sovereign pleasure and of its universal providence. However, then, wicked and cunning men may boast themselves of their devices ; and however partizans may calculate upon their successes, the government of God will treat them as chaff before the whirlwind. When they look for safety, behold, sudden destruction. "If the people imagine a vain thing, and if the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : The Lord shall have them in derision. He taketh the cunning in their own craftiness."

In calling attention more particularly to the character of our late President, it is worthy of remark, that his is more interwoven with the history of the country, by a variety of public events, than that of any President since the days of Washington. Since his death, special attention has been given to acquire a knowledge of him, as exhibited in historical sketches, and in those facts and incidents, which have been spread before the community. The common, if not the universal feeling is, that the superiority of his character was not understood, even by most of those who sought his elevation to office. It is a melancholy circumstance, that such is the prostitution of the public press, and such the recklessness of party, displayed in unmeaning eulogy or in indiscriminate and unmeasured condemnation, that a quiet and reflecting man turns in disgust, alike from the fulsome flatteries and the careless censures, which are heaped upon all who are placed before the public for high stations. We are often obliged to wait until the grave has closed over

our patriots before we can understand their characters, much less estimate their worth.

General Harrison possessed naturally an inward hilarity of feeling, which, in connection with his pure intentions, made goodness a spontaneous play-fellow in his mind ; a hilarity of feeling, which belonged to his family, and was possessed in such degree by that noble ancestor of his, who dared, in the defence of liberty and law, to place his foot upon the neck of Charles I., that a familiar acquaintance said of him, that he was “naturally of such a vivacity, hilarity and alacrity as another man hath, when he hath drunken a cup too much.”* It was this quality of his natural character, that led him to seek from every one that approbation of his own conduct, which calls up, and gives expression to joyous feeling ; and to deprecate that censure and reproach which produces hate and wrath, or disappointment and disgust. He was uncommonly sensitive to public favor. His mind yearned for its sunshine, as its natural element of joy. There was no love of power for its own sake, or to gratify selfish or ambitious views. Every public interest was perfectly safe in his hands. He had opportunities of amassing boundless wealth, in his public trusts ; but he came out of them poor, by his generosity and fidelity. He could have placed his family in situations of eminence and wealth ; but he scrupulously avoided every appearance of selfish aggrandizement, by their exaltation. Still he delighted in the approbation of all men, for it produced in them that gladness of mind nearest resembling his own spontaneous and joyous feeling ; and did, as it were, multiply and extend the spirit of his own heart far and wide. This was the ground of his popularity, and it made him, not a partizan, but a man of charity, even towards his opponents ; and of kindly and benevolent feeling in his daily intercourse with all persons. His liberal education taught him to look into the records of the past for wisdom ; and having become

* Richard Baxter.

specially familiar with Greek and Roman history, he studied their best patriots as favorite models. His mind did not rest upon the mere facts and circumstances of historical detail. He regarded them mainly as they illustrated that wisdom and goodness, which his joyous feelings led him to delight in. His mind, after having been, as it were, upon the boisterous and tempestuous sea of history, would return like the bird of peace to the quiet and joyous haven of his own goodness; and there brood over and nourish the wise thoughts that goodness is always instinct with, and which all the facts and circumstances of human life do but illustrate and confirm, as of paramount importance. In this way, his mind was kept in such a free and impartial state, that it could not be subjected, for any considerable time, to the chance passions and the conflicting interests of his temporary circumstances. He became wise and sagacious by the rich goodness of his own heart; and this, connected with a physical constitution of sleepless activity, made him the safe depositary and the watchful guardian of every interest that could be committed to him.

At the age of nineteen and twenty, when the young soldier of fortune, he was removed from the restraints of civilized life, and surrounded by temptations to intemperance and dissipation, aided by the almost omnipotent force of public opinion and public example in the army; a force to which none of us would dare subject a child or a friend. But he was kept by his love of goodness, with a vestal's purity, from yielding to his temptations. This, as a fixed point in his own heart from which to reason, gave him great coolness and great clearness in judging of the course of conduct to be pursued in any emergency. The quick eye of his commander, General Wayne, saw how temptations to idleness, to vice, to folly, fell off from him as though his joyous and homefelt goodness was an invincible but charmed shield to ward off every thing from the serene and sun-lighted

calmness of his own mind. Therefore did he repose unbounded confidence in him. Think of him, at the age of twenty-two, as placed in the command of a Fort, which protected, for thousands of miles, the whole Western frontier of the United States, and which required not mere courage in defence, but incessant activity, together with patience, and perseverance, and diplomatic tact. He was encompassed by active, secret, and treacherous foes, who were to be restrained and guided more by a power whose justice they saw and whose protection they could confide in, than in the mere display of warlike courage. From this trial he came forth with such honor, as to be placed, at the age of twenty-six, in Congress, to espouse, to project into laws and regulations, and to defend, the cause of humanity for the great Western section of the United States ; and that, too, against the cupidity and self-aggrandizement of many, who were supported by money, by official station, and by legal enactments confirmed by habitual usage. Against all these the young man stood up, sustained by his own love of wide-spreading and joyous happiness, which he saw would in a moment burst in upon the great wilderness of the West, and make it bud and blossom as the rose ; sustained by this, and fortified by his own sense of justice, he originated and perfected the plan which wrenched the great West from the hands of ravenous speculators or of lordly proprietors, and has filled it with joyous families and enterprising citizens.

What then could be more natural, than that the spontaneous feeling of the Western people should call upon him, who had been their protector and advocate, to be their Governor ; which office he bore for thirteen years. It was the rich and unbought reward of exalted worth. His mind found delight—a delight congenial to his natural hilarity and goodness of heart, in beholding the swelling buds and the opening leaves, and the bursting flowers that sprang up in the cabins, as they rose on the prairies of the West. In this station he cultivated the friendship of the natives. He

secured both their respect and their confidence. He formed numerous treaties with them, as surprising for their wisdom and prudence, as they were uncompromising in their justice and equity ; and which, without despoiling others, brought millions upon millions into our national treasury.

But savage barbarity could not long brook to see its power breaking down, and its will subjected to the natural and healthful law of order and justice, which was extending itself under his peaceful administration. Its free ferocity was about to be curbed, its unsubdued passions restrained, and its rude, vast, unlimited, child-like imaginings controlled. These feelings became embodied in the person of Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet, who resolved to roll back the tide of population that was crossing the Alleghany mountains, and with the knife and the tomahawk, make the land clean of the white man. With such a Governor it was difficult to find an occasion for open war ; and the Warrior and the Prophet were constrained to assume, for the first time in Indian diplomacy, the ground that none of the tribes, however advantageously to themselves, could separate themselves from the great household of Indian humanity, without the free and full consent of all the tribes of the West. It was the magnificent idea of a despotic mind, which aimed to control a hundred nations by its own will. If the conception was grand, the means for effecting it were still more so. In the gloomy recesses of minds capacious of such things, the Warrior and his Brother determined to bury the hatchet with every hostile tribe, and bind it to their own vast and stupendous plan for union in glory, on the one hand, and for extirpation and destruction on the other. They summoned to their aid the powers of Indian eloquence, the renown of Indian warfare, the ferocity of Indian excitement ; and they called, and it came at their bidding, the whole mystery and power of gloomy superstition over barbarian minds ; and with incantations and preternatural delusions, they succeeded in forming an alliance,

which hung for a time, like a cloudy tempest of fire and desolation, over the West. The falcon eye of Harrison saw this in its origin, and his prudence prepared for it. As the murmur of its coming fury sighed through the wilderness, he resolved, with characteristic energy and decision, to meet the tempest, and precipitate its hailstones and fire before it had acquired its greatest magnitude, and its most destructive impetus. This was done on the field of Tippecanoe. There the bow of the Warrior was broken ; and the Dragon that watched in the hall of superstition was slain. The country was delivered. The sleep of the cradle is now unbroken. The harvest of the field is now secured.

Time would fail me to enter into detail concerning his success as a commander, over the British and Indians, in the war of 1812—of the manner in which he discharged his duties as a Senator of the United States, and subsequently as a Foreign Ambassador, and of his conduct and bearing as a private citizen, and during his prospective elevation to that high station to which he was called by the voice of the nation. In them all, is seen a most singular simplicity and purity. There are no violations of moral obligation, no stains upon his moral character, no duels, no gusts of passionate feeling, no acts of sudden oppression. He can be held up for contemplation, without solicitude, to our children. There was a most rare union of all that could make a man loved, or respected, or confided in. He had passed through all political offices, he had been in all employments, which could try his firmness, which could exhaust his patience, which could tempt a passion for gain or for power, which could betray his prudence, which could lull his watchfulness to a false security, which could bring discredit upon his integrity, or which could mar the purity of his Christian character. He proved himself adequate to every station, and came forth clothed with that humility of greatness, and that meekness of wisdom, which never attracts to itself the wondering gaze of men, for the love of applause ; but is

content, having secured their approbation, to retire, in the consciousness of having deserved it, to the enjoyment of domestic peace and the quiet of natural employments. The most that has been said by any one against him is, that the superiority of his goodness was more manifest than his intellectual greatness. Why should it not be so? He was not learned, as a retired scholar, or a deep read professional man. His active life did not permit it; nor did he possess that tyrannical will, which seeks to bind all minds, over which it can acquire influence, to the fiery ear of its own temper, and which commonly passes among political men for intellectual superiority. But be it so, that his goodness was more conspicuous than his intellectual superiority. It was out of goodness itself that this frame of universal nature sprang. It is goodness, that governs this world. It is the governing quality in the universe of God. He, who has it, can govern by the wisdom of goodness. He, who has it not, can be only cunning. Not content with being good, Adam sought to raise his knowledge above his goodness, and brought in ruin upon the race. And such, under the providence of a Being, who is goodness itself, will always be the ultimate result. Intellectual adroitness and temporary expediency may answer for the day, but goodness alone will ultimately sway all hearts, and effect all praiseworthy objects. The intellectual qualities of our departed Ruler were kept in such due subjection to the goodness of his heart, that they were not discerned by ordinary observers. Like those monuments of Architecture, whose exactness of proportion and whose beauty of finish seem to dwarf them to distant and to superficial observers, but which on a nearer view and a closer inspection rise from beauty to majesty, and from majesty to sublimity, so the character of this man being now brought home to the eyes and hearts of the whole nation, we see the completeness of its proportions, and admire the greatness of its strength, and the glory of its eminent excellence. Death hath rent the veil of his heart, and

we behold there every good and righteous purpose shrouded, as it were, in a cloud of devotional incense, which seemed, in the last days of his life, constantly ascending.

There is that, which is deeply affecting to every thoughtful mind, in the religious character of our departed Ruler. Like that of Washington, his whole character is unintelligible, except on the supposition of a deep and home-felt piety. They were neither of them ambitious of power, and in their hours of retirement and meditation they were not planning schemes for personal aggrandizement, or for personal gratification. Nor were they devoted to the interests of a party, but they sought to advance the public interests in such a way as truth and justice demanded, and thus to carry society on towards its perfection. Their minds could not, therefore, but constantly recur to that "order, which is heaven's first law," as the pre-established law for all permanent happiness, and for all pure enjoyment. This could not but be magnified in their minds as the source of all good to man, and therefore the character, and the Being out of which it sprang, was worthy the most profound reverence, and the highest adoration on their part. Were there no facts, in the lives of each, showing this in particular acts and habits of secret prayer, and in solemn public acts and habits of reverence and adoration, every reflecting mind would see it must be so in the inner sanctuary of their hearts. The public character of the men, being what it really was, unstained by passion, and without the love of power for its own sake, it is not possible, if you penetrate beyond the outer court of official formality, to the sanctuary of their thoughts, and find them intent on good, and thence to the inmost sanctuary of the soul, it is not possible that any thing should be there found except the two great tablets of that immutable law, which God has given us, the first declaration of which is, "*Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*" We all of us feel it would be sacrilege, if not blasphemy, to suppose that in the penetralia of their bosoms these men had

erected idols to the crooked and dust-eating serpents, or the beastly calves of party or ambitious adoration. They had no image graven by art and man's device. They set themselves against all such, and sought only that justice and judgment might be the stability of their character and of their acts; for they revered above all "Him, who judgeth righteously." This is abundantly manifest in the "Farewell Address" of the one, and in the "Inaugural Address," and in the "Circular" to the several Departments, of the other.

There was more of silent thoughtfulness in the former, and more of that open communicativeness in the latter, which leads to a ready compliance with the ordinary outward habits of religious life. He loved intercourse with religious men, he delighted in religious duties, he rejoiced in public benevolent acts, such as characterize religious people, and was ready to give beyond his means to aid in every excellent and public object.

At the age of sixty-seven, and just as he was entering his high office, he visited the house of his boyhood, the room of his birth; he pointed out the closet where his mother retired for private devotion—the corner of the room where she sat to read her Bible, and taught him on his knees, to say "Our Father, who art in Heaven." The letter to his wife, dated on the morning of his inauguration, shows that, in his closet, he had been seeking the requisite wisdom and strength, which cometh from above, for the high duties and responsibilities of that day. Its morning light found him like Solomon, as he entered upon his kingly authority, communing with God and saying, "I am but a little child, I know not how to go out or to come in, and thy servant is in the midst of thy people, which thou has chosen; a great people that cannot be numbered and counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between the good and bad." Look at the "Inaugural Address" and at the "Circular" sent to the different departments of the government, and

you may see with what righteous integrity he sought to discern between the good and the bad. His home was known as a house of quietness and devotion on the Sabbath ; intrusive company were excluded ; and the word of God, the word of wisdom and of love, the word of knowledge and of understanding, was his daily study. O, how like unto the great ruler of Israel, who said, " Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Through thy precepts I get understanding, and, therefore, I hate every false way. Thy statutes are my song in the house of my pilgrimage."

The loss of such a Ruler is indeed a national calamity, so far as our weak faith can understand. But " The Lord hath purposed it to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth," that we may know that he is God, and that he will not give his glory to another. Let us then, with grateful feelings, treasure up the memory of those virtues, which have been so unexpectedly removed from our sight ; and, with deep humility, mourn over that confidence which we have placed in man, and that trust which we have exercised in our own plans, and which has been so signally rebuked in this event. The great and the good has fallen ; and while we stand around the open grave, in which is buried our hope, let us cry, " Our Father, our Father, be thou our rod and our staff, our shield and our buckler, our sure defence. Then will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

NOTE.—[PAGE 13.]

Good men of quiet tempers, have, at all periods, sought to allay the bitterness of party strife. But many have supposed the only way to do this was to keep in such ignorance of political principles and political relations, as to make it impossible to form an opinion on such matters ; or utterly to refuse to express that opinion, either by speech, or by the performance of those duties which grow out of the rights of citizenship. Doubtless every right-minded man should considerately regard the time, place, and manner of exercising any particular right by the performance of the duties it involves; and seek to avoid, not only evil, but, as far as may be, the appearance of evil. But he displays little knowledge of human society, and no foresight, who supposes that his own forbearance to exercise his rights by the performance of the duties, which fealty to the constitution requires, will produce unity of principle and unity of action in the mass of society. This unity cannot come from the forbearance of the members of the State towards each other; but from the reception and the belief of political truths in which all agree, in distinction from an adherence to the particular notions, and the individual opinions, which each happens to form of the men or the measures of the day. It is by clearly seeing and constantly upholding these political truths, that unity in spirit is produced, and the bond of peace cemented. It is by the belief in such, that some men are capable of an earnest love for their country, and an honest zeal for the welfare of its institutions, who will not be made convenient tools for other men to use for party purposes.

That there are such political truths, which are consciously or unconsciously received by the people as a whole, no man doubts, who heartily believes in the possibility of the self-government of the nation. And the man, who does not heartily believe this, may well inquire by what right, asserted in his own conscience, he calls himself an American citizen, or on what just ground he holds fealty to the constitution of his country. And yet there are men, and some so blinded as perhaps not to know it is true of themselves who are faithless concerning the existence of political truths, in which the people at large believe. He, who thinks that men are to be guided or governed by arraying one class against another, has no faith in there being political truths in which all agree, and that by giving full scope and influence to them, harmonious and healthful action would take place. He does not seek to explain in a logical and intelligent way, the unconscious principles, which are at the bottom of the desires of all honest men for good government and for just and purifying institutions. But he arrays man against his fellow, and teaches hate and opposition to classes

of men, not because they are personally bad, but because they happen to be lawyers or clergymen, mechanics or farmers, merchants or bankers. By his willingness thus to do evil that good may come, he shows his want of faith in the good.

There is a more excellent way than this ; and that is, with kind patience, but with honest fearlessness, to show up those political truths, which the people are ready to act upon, but which it requires their "sober, second thought," to understand how to apply in all cases. It is a political truth, in which all men agree, that there is no man who wishes to submit, or who will submit, except by a necessity which he cannot control, to be governed by men because they are rich ; nor on the other hand, is there any man who will submit to be governed by men because they are poor. The same may be affirmed of any other class or classes in the community. And he, therefore, that would array the one against the other, for the purpose of governing them, has no faith in the existence of political truths, in virtue of which the people are united under one form of political existence. It is another political truth in which all men agree, that government is not organized for the men who hold office, be they Kings, Lords, or Commons ; or Presidents, Senators, and Representatives ; and therefore that the power of government is not to be applied to benefit the selfish wishes of the office bearers. It is also another political truth, that government is intended to be an organization for the public weal, *res publica*, a thing for the public ; that is, an organization by which the members of the State have their rights, both as men and as citizens, secured to them, that the nation may obtain the highest happiness, and the greatest purity, that belong to social existence.

It is by keeping these and such like truths before the people, and awakening that unity of feeling, which they inspire, that we may hope to mitigate the evils of party dissensions. And if those, who give attention to political matters, would seek to understand more fully than many do, the truths and principles unconsciously involved in the desires of all honest men for good government, and to explain them, so that the nation might become conscious of them, it would greatly allay the feverish heat of party strife. It would induce a mutual confidence, and a feeling of unity, which would issue in harmonious action, and produce the happiest fruits. But so long as men rank themselves as party men, and ascribe to their opponents all the evil intentions that they suppose have existed under the various forms of the most iniquitous governments, so long will political truths be disregarded or misunderstood, and the community will be swayed hither and thither by a class of names, and nothing but names. We have renounced the rights of primogeniture, and all the ancestral glory or excellence that others ascribe to it ; we are neither of York nor Lancaster, we wear neither the White Rose nor the Red ; but still many of us are willing to gain the glory of a political pedigree by tracing our opinions to a connection with those of some warrior or statesman, or sage of the Revolution, and, prefixing his name to our party, strive to shelter the nakedness of our own opinions under the majesty of his robe. Instead of this, why may we not spend our strength in unfolding and explaining those political truths, which are the ground of our well being and the source of our happiness ; and thus produce that unity of spirit, and that bond of peace, which is the perfection of social existence.

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